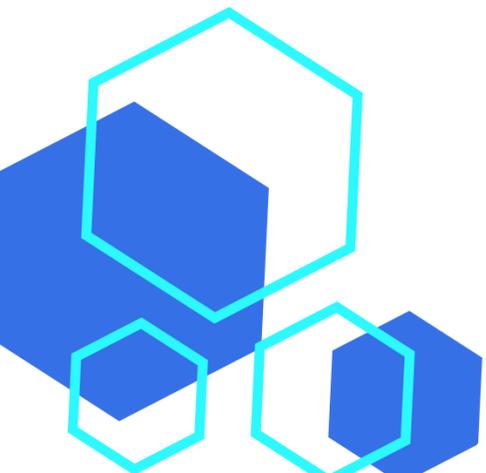


◆ **Autism Waiver Waitlist – The Full Picture**

For the ASDAC Legislative Committee

Fairness, Reality, and Forward Movement

Transparency • Ethics • Shared Responsibility





## The Waitlist

- 2,500+ individuals currently waiting (ages 3.5–73)
- All HCBS waivers operate strictly by application date  
This ensures the process is fair, impartial and ethical
- Functional or subjective prioritization would not be equitable  
We cannot move people ahead of others based on perceived need
- Changing rules would require fully funding the entire waitlist,  
then starting over



# Understanding Service Utilization

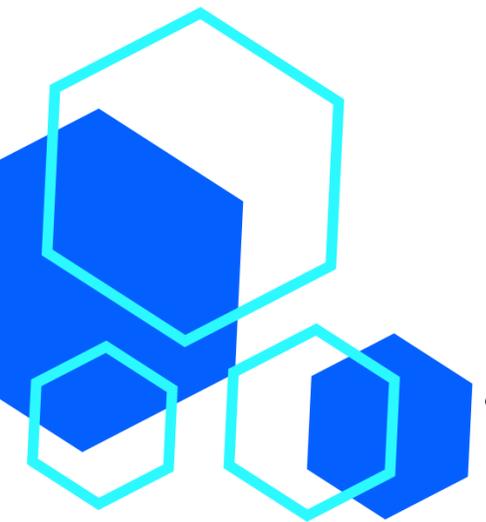
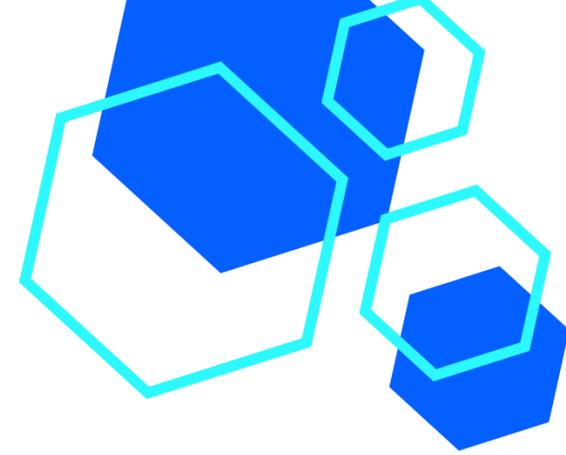
What the numbers don't show

You may hear concerns about low utilization on the waiver

Here's the reality:

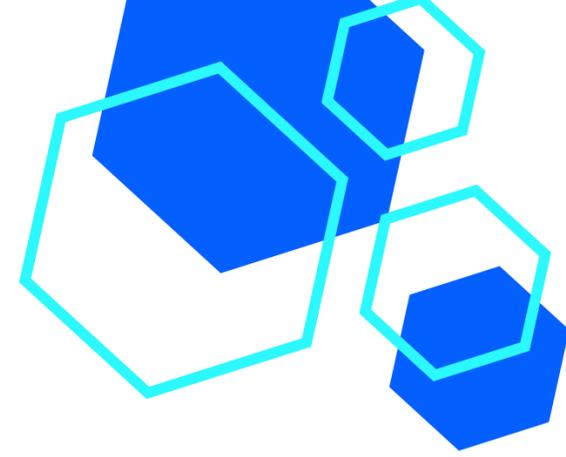
Low utilization happens for different reasons:

- Provider and staffing shortages
- Individuals only needing limited services at certain life stages
  - Autism spans all ages and ability levels
  - Needs change over time
- Services may ebb and flow throughout a lifetime
- ✓ Using fewer services does not violate waiver rules
  - ✓ There is no penalty for using only one service
- ✓ **The value of services for one person does not diminish the needs of another**





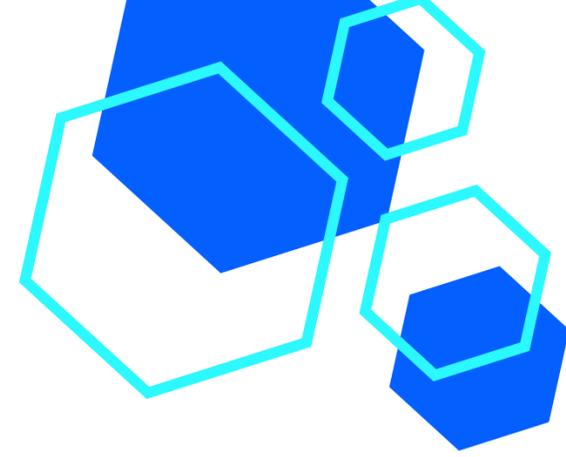
# Understanding Service Utilization



This is a Lifetime Waiver  
This is not an age-out waiver

- Unfortunately, some individuals decline services when first offered after waiting many years because they don't need them at that time
- Later in life, their needs may increase—but they must reapply and rejoin the waitlist
  - While difficult, this is part of maintaining fairness for everyone waiting





## **Real Challenges**

Provider **shortages** and staffing shortages

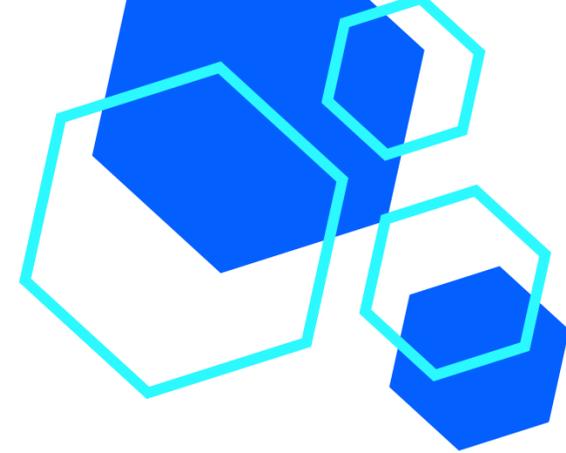
**Static** waitlist

Autism waiver **rates** are lower than other waivers





# What We're Actively Doing



## Provider Shortages

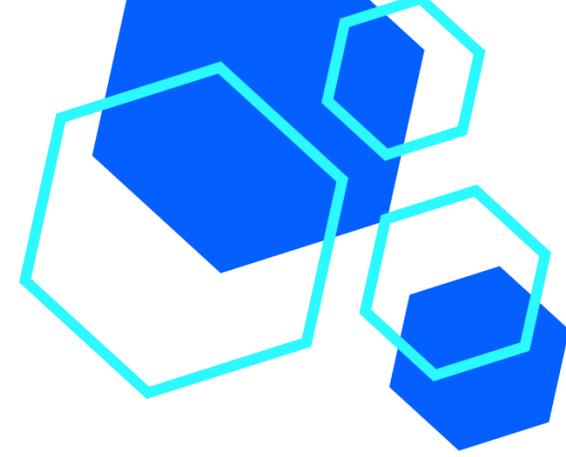
- A mass memo recently sent to all Medicaid providers highlighting urgent autism waiver needs
- Promotion of the searchable Provider Directory
- Creating “How to Become a Waiver Provider” materials on the DSS website
- Outreach to clinical and regional partners (DDS, DCF)

## Static Waitlist

- Implementing best-practice onboarding procedures to speed up pending enrollments
- Hiring momentum: three new Case Managers started Friday
- Goal to fill current slots
- Resource Specialist on the waiver team helps those who are waiting access other supports now
- Encouraging those individuals on the waiver 65+ who can find appropriate services on another waiver to do so, if appropriate



# What We're Actively Doing

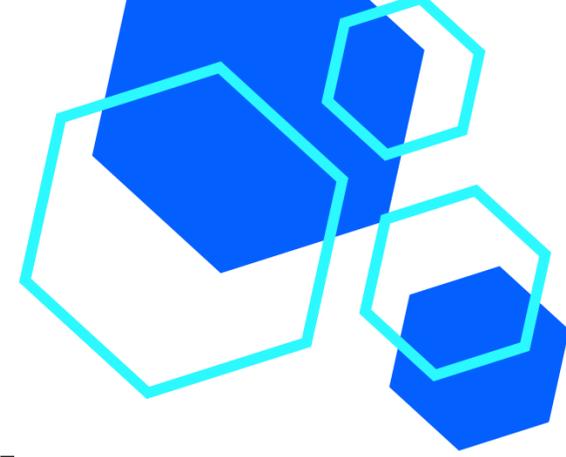


## Rates

- Autism Waiver rates are lower than other waivers
- DSS cannot change rates internally
- Advocates play a key role by engaging legislators

Funding secured for a statewide Needs Assessment will help guide future planning and waiver improvements



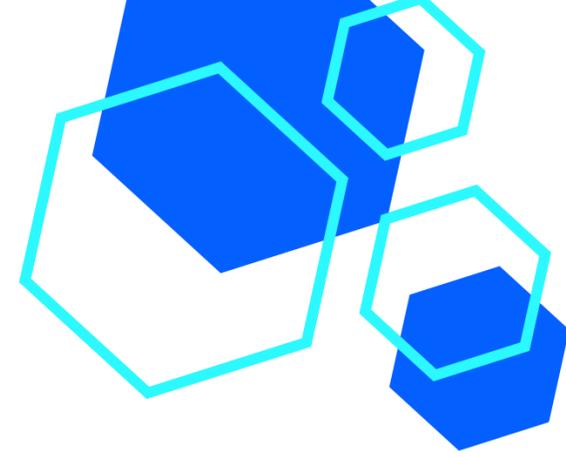


## **Path Forward – Where You Can Help with Advocacy**

Legislative advocacy is essential for system-wide changes  
Any changes would require CMS approval and legislative action

- Advocate for rate increases to attract providers
  - Which would necessitate higher service caps
- Advocate for expanded service options (e.g. day programming)
- Possible evaluation of age limits and transitions to elder waivers





## **Shared Goal**

Everyone here wants the same thing:

A fair system that provides meaningful, sustainable support to individuals with autism—now and in the future.

We appreciate your partnership, your advocacy, and your commitment to understanding the full picture.

